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(72) Inventor: Dahlbom, Bo
30265 Halmstad (SE)

(74) Representative: Petri, Stellan et al
Ström & Gulliksson IPC AB,
Box 4188
203 13 Malmö (SE)

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(71) Applicant: National Gummi AB
30265 Halmstad (SE)

(54) Wiper blade and a method for the manufacturing thereof

(57) A wiper blade of rubber for cleaning a pane, e. g. a windscreen or the like, which comprises a rubber profile (10, 20, 40, 50) having an edge that on both sides is coated with polymeric layers (11, 12). The rubber profile (10, 20, 40, 50) is manufactured by extrusion during which the rubber profile (10, 20, 40, 50) is coated with the polymeric layers (11, 12) when it passes a tool (34)

providing its shape. After transversal compression the rubber profile (10, 20, 40, 50) is divided along a longitudinal axis (A) and a concave edge surface is formed in the division line. The surface is on both sides surrounded by the polymeric layers (12, 13), which form sharp edges (23, 24). Those sharp edges (23, 24) abut the windscreen and will efficiently clean it from precipitation and dirt.

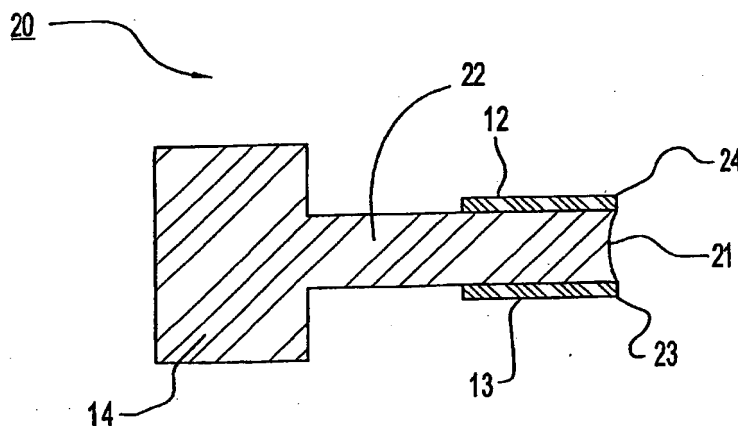


FIG 2

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Description**Technical Field**

[0001] The present invention relates to a wiper blade made of rubber for cleaning a pane of glass, for example a wind screen or the like, comprising a rubber profile having an edge for abutting the pane.

[0002] In addition, the present invention relates to a method for the manufacturing of a wiper blade according to the above-mentioned type.

Background of the Invention

[0003] The manufacturing of wiper blades is generally performed by injection moulding rubber requiring a high-polished tool, especially produced for this purpose, which gives smooth components or products. A drawback of those existing wiper blades when used in wind-screen wipers is that they present a high friction against the windscreen, which may lead to sound or squeaking. Another drawback is that they often have a low wear resistance and are worn out in short time resulting in that they have to be changed frequently, causing the car owner an additional cost. In wintertime there is also a problem regarding wiper blades frozen to the windscreen, when using commonly existing rubber qualities.

[0004] Extrusion of rubber is a well-known technology for the manufacturing of sealings or sealing strips. The manufacturing may be continuous, allowing a more cost-effective production for some products in comparison with manufacturing by injection moulding, and thus the result is less expensive products. Experiments have been made regarding production of wiper blades by means of extrusion. However, they have showed that it is difficult to get the edge or the surface abutting the windscreen sufficiently even or flat to smoothly sweep away water, snow or other precipitation or to satisfactory clean the windscreen.

[0005] Other experiments have been made with mixing powder of polytetrafluoro ethylene into the rubber to get an edge or a lip against the windscreen, which is smooth and hard and which has a low friction against the windscreen, however, this experiment did not reach the expected results regarding for example cleaning and high durability.

[0006] There are alternative injection moulded wiper blades for windscreen wipers containing two different qualities of rubber in one and the same blade. The wiper blade has a back of synthetic rubber for a silent function without sound having a spring ledge placed inside to get a more uniform pressure distribution, and having an extra hard lip of natural rubber against the windscreen for efficiently cleaning it. The drawback of this type of wiper blades is that they are expensive to produce without being specific durable.

[0007] One on the market recently launched wiper blade is made of injection moulded polytetrafluoro eth-

ylene, a material with a very low friction and which due to its stiffness allows a good cleaning. A disadvantage is that polytetrafluoro ethylene is not durable and is also a very expensive material.

Summary of the Invention

[0008] An object of the present invention is to remedy the drawbacks above and to provide a wiper blade made of rubber having a minimal friction against the windscreen, which has a high wear resistance and which efficiently cleans the windscreen, and a method for the manufacturing thereof, allowing a continuous manufacturing at a low cost.

[0009] A more specific object of the present invention is to manufacture a wiper blade with an edge for abutment against the windscreen by extruding a rubber profile, which on both sides is coated by a polymeric layer during extrusion. The polymeric layers are integrated with the rubber during the extrusion, and the rubber profile, coated by polymeric layers, is then cured in a heating stove, whereupon the rubber profile is compressed in the transversal direction and is divided along a longitudinal axis. A concave surface arises in the cut, when the compression ceases, which on both sides has a polymeric layer having a sharp edge. After cutting the rubber profile provided with the polymeric layers into individual lengths, the obtained wiper blade is mounted into a clamp or an yoke and is fastened for example on a vehicle, with the edges on both sides of the concave surface abutting the wind screen. The sharp polymeric edges allows a careful cleaning of the wind screen without noise or squeaking due to the low friction of the material against the wind screen, simultaneously the wiper blade has an elasticity because of the rubber core.

[0010] Other objectives, features and advantages of the present invention will appear from the following detailed description, the enclosed drawings and the claims.

Brief Description of the Drawings

[0011] The invention will be disclosed in detail below, reference being made to the accompanying drawings, in which

FIG 1 shows a schematic perspective view of an extruded rubber profile provided with polymeric layers on both sides according to the invention, FIG 2 shows a schematic side view of a wiper blade for a wind screen wiper according the invention, FIG 3 shows a schematic side view of an arrangement for manufacturing a wiper blade according to the invention, FIG 4 shows a side view of a profile of a wiper blade according to an alternate embodiment of the invention, and FIG 5 shows a side view of an extruded rubber pro-

file according to the embodiment in FIG 4 before the longitudinal division of the rubber profile.

Description of the Invention

[0012] The extruded rubber profile 10, as shown in FIG 1, comprises a middle portion 11 that on its upper side and on its lower side has a thin polymeric layer 12 and 13, respectively, and has two outer portions 14, which each is adapted to be arranged into a not shown clamp or yoke. The material of the rubber profile 10 may for example be ethylene propylene rubber, which is ageing resistant and non-expensive material.

[0013] The rubber profile 10 is symmetrical around an axis A-A along which the rubber profile may be divided into two identical units 20, but it may also be unsymmetrical in respect to this division line. The unit 20 has a first portion 22, which is terminated in a concave surface 21 at one side and changes into a second portion 14 at the other side. The concave surface 21 is surrounded by polymer layers 23, 24 on both sides, which form sharp edges.

[0014] The method for manufacturing wiper blades according to the invention will now be described in detail. FIG 3 shows an arrangement 30 for manufacturing a wiper blade according to the invention. In a first step, the rubber profile 10 is extruded by means of an extruder, the rubber 32 being passed from a head 33 of the extruder into a tool 34 giving the rubber profile 10 a specific shape, performed in a well known way for those skilled in the art. When the rubber profile 10 passes this tool 34 a polymeric foil 35, which is supplied into the tool 34 from a roll 36, is applied on the upper surface and on the lower surface, respectively, of the middle portion 11. The middle portion 11 of the rubber profile has a thickness of about 0.8-1mm, and the foils have a thickness of about 0.1mm. The foil coating is continuously made during the extrusion and with additional heat supply from hot air blowers 37 at a proportionately high temperature of about 170°C-180°C to cause the polymeric layers 12 and 13, respectively formed by the foil, to be integrated with the rubber in the middle portion 11. The polymeric material is preferably an ultra high molecular polyethylene or the like, since an ordinary polyethylene not is able to stand up to the required high temperature without melting. This particular polyethylene has a high wear resistance and a very low friction, and for those reasons it is especially suitable in this application. The manufacturing of the rubber profile provided with the polymeric layers 12 and 13, respectively, is performed continuously and the product is gradually fed forward in the direction of the arrow B. In a second step the rubber profile is cured at about 240°C in a well known way in a microwave equipment or a hot air oven, thereafter it is cooled down. In a third step the middle portion 11 is compressed in the transverse direction to about its half thickness and is divided along the longitudinal axis A-A, the two rubber profiles 20 being obtained. The rubber profile

20 strives to resume its shape when the compression ceases, and the concave surface 21 arises when the rubber in the portion 22 due to its elasticity creeps inwardly between the two polymeric layers 12 and 13, which because of their stiffness form well defined, sharp edges. In a fourth step the rubber profiles 20 are cut into appropriate lengths to individual wiper blades. The wiper blade is then arranged in a not shown clamp or yoke, the outer portion 14 being mounted into the clamp. The sharp edges 23, 24 of the polymeric layers on both sides of the concave surface 21 will abut against the windscreen and will efficiently clean the windscreen from dirt and precipitation. The wiper blade functions in a reciprocating way, similar to a brush movement; one of the polymeric edges of the wiper blade initially sweeps over the windscreen, then the other polymeric edge of the same wiper blade takes over - when the windscreen wiper changes direction - and continues the movement back to the original position.

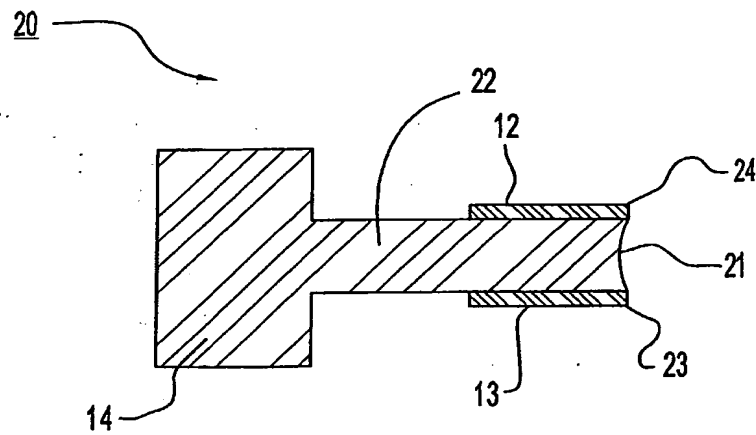
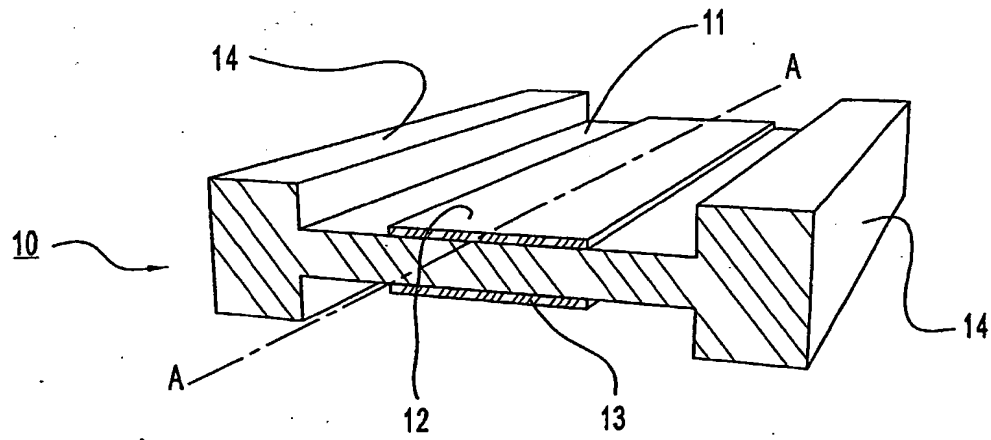
[0015] An important advantage of the wiper blade according to the invention is that it functions soundless since the friction against the windscreen is very low. Another advantage of the invention is that the continuous manufacturing of wiper blades by extrusion is very cost efficient and hence provides less expensive products in comparison with such products that are injection moulded. A further advantage is the high wear resistance due to the combination of ethylene propylene rubber and ultra high molecular polyethylene, which also provide a very good function regarding cleaning and which also during wintertime imply that the wiper blade not will freeze to the windscreen.

[0016] FIG 4 shows an alternate embodiment of a unit, which should be compared to the unit 20 and which comprises a second portion 41 having a totally different appearance than the other portion 14. Analogous to what has been described above, the unit 40 is one of two identical units that are formed after division of an extruded rubber profile 50 according to FIG 5. A first portion 42 of the unit 40 has also another appearance than the first portion 21 of the unit 20, but is terminated at one end by a concave surface 43, which at both sides is surrounded by sharp edges from the polymeric layers 44, 45.

[0017] The present invention has been described as an example with reference to preferred embodiments according to FIG 1 and FIG 2, and FIG 3 and FIG 4, respectively, without being limited to these embodiments. Alternate embodiments than the above described may exist within the scope of the enclosed claims, as are easily realised by those skilled in the art. The appearance of the rubber profile may for example vary depending on its attaching in the clamp of the windscreen. The rubber profile can for example be shaped as a ball regarding the second portion 14 in applications where the requirements of the attaching not are so high, e.g. a wiper blade in an ordinary window scraper.

Claims

1. A wiper blade of rubber for cleaning a pane, for example a windscreen or the like, comprising a rubber profile (10, 20, 40, 50) having an edge for abutting the windscreen, **characterized in that** the rubber profile (10, 20, 40, 50) on both sides of the edge is coated by a polymeric layer (12, 13, 44, 45) and that the rubber profile (10, 20, 40, 50) along the edge forms a concave edge surface (21, 43) between the on both sides of the rubber profile located polymeric layers (12, 13, 44, 45).
2. A wiper blade according to claim 1, **characterized in that** the polymeric layers (12, 13, 44, 45) consist of an ultra high molecular polyethylene.
3. A wiper blade according to claim 1 or 2, **characterized in that** the polymeric layers (12, 13, 44, 45) form sharp edges on both sides of the concave edge surface (21, 43).
4. A method for manufacturing a wiper blade for cleaning a pane, e.g. a windscreen or the like, comprising a rubber profile (10, 20, 40, 50), having an edge for abutting the windscreen, which on both sides of the edge is coated by polymeric layers (12, 13, 44, 45) and which along the edge form a concave edge surface (21, 43) between the on both sides of the profile located polymeric layers (12, 13, 44, 45), **characterized by** the steps:
 - extruding the rubber profile (10, 20, 40, 50),
 - applying the polymeric layers (12, 13, 44, 45) on both sides of the rubber profile (10, 20, 40, 50) during extrusion of the profile for integrating the polymeric layers (12, 13, 44, 45) with the rubber profile (10, 20, 40, 50),
 - compressing the rubber profile (10, 20, 40, 50) provided with the polymeric layers in the transversal direction of the both sides, and
 - dividing the compressed rubber profile (10, 20, 40, 50) along a longitudinal axis so that the rubber profile (10, 20, 40, 50) will form the concave surface (21, 43) in the division line, when the compression ceases.
5. A method according claim 4, **characterized in that** the compression of the rubber profile (10, 20, 40, 50) provided with the polymeric layers is made to half the thickness of the profile (10, 20, 40, 50).
6. A method according claim 4, **characterized in that** integrating the polymeric layers (12, 13, 44, 45) is performed during heat supply.
7. A method according claim 4-6, **characterized in that** the polymeric material is an ultra high molecular polyethylene.
8. A method according any of the claims 4-7, **characterized in that** the polymeric layers (12, 13, 44, 45) is applied as a foil (35), when the rubber profile (10, 20, 40, 50) passes through an extrusion tool (34) providing its profile, and that the heat supply is simultaneously done.
9. A method according any of the claims 4-8, **characterized in that** the thickness of the foil (35) is about 0.1mm.
10. A method according any of the claims 4-9, **characterized by** the steps of curing the rubber profile (10, 20, 40, 50) provided with polymeric layers during heat supply and cutting the rubber profile (10, 20, 40, 50) across its width to provide individual wiper blades of a specific length.



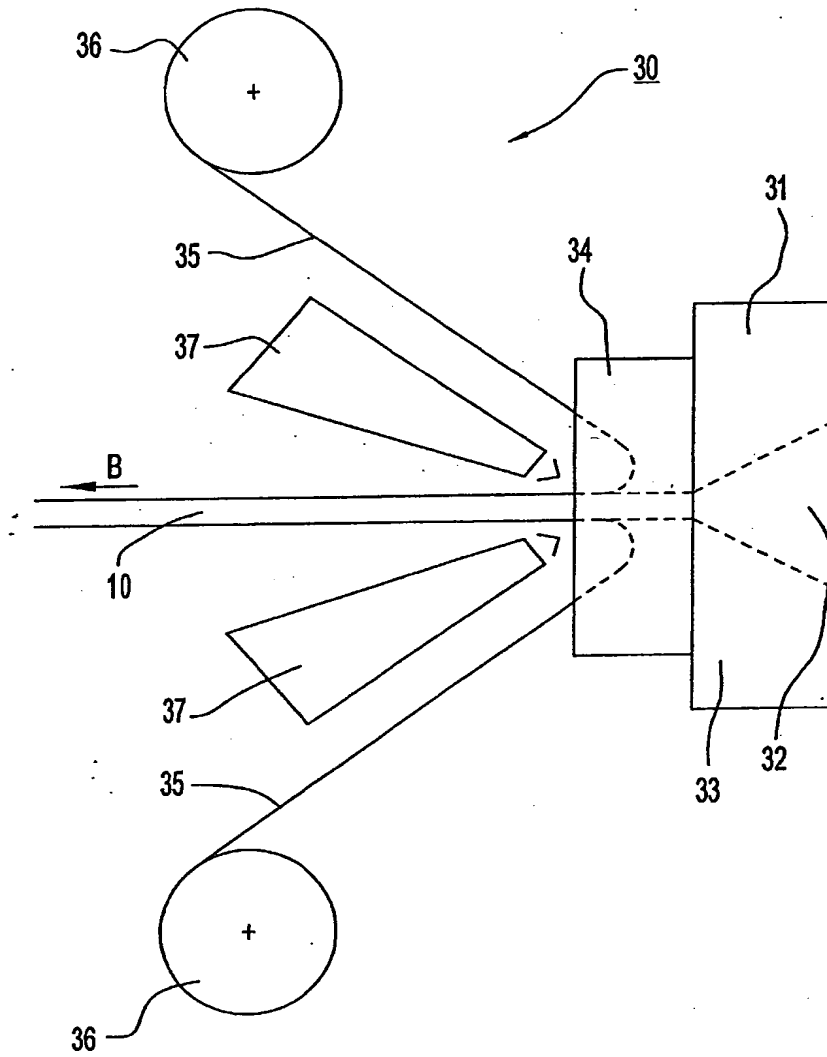


FIG 3

